



Doing more for jobs and businesses

A strong economy is fundamental to maintaining the quality of life for all residents in our city. Although the city experienced significant economic growth in the last decade, we face a less certain economic future today. Seattle must create an environment in which businesses and workers can thrive. In his first 100 days as mayor, Nickels has appointed an Economic Opportunity Task Force to create the city's economic development blue print to aid and expand the city's job base and to improve its business climate. The mayor's 2003-2004 budget implements many of the recommendations. Specifically, the Mayor's budget:

Strengthens General Business Climate

- Includes funding for a **business advocate** who will do more to assist businesses resolve specific problems and access city services.
- Includes resources for DCLU to:
 - **streamline and simplify the land use code**, starting with the commercial section of the code.
 - get the **application wait time down to 10 working days** (currently, it can take up to 4 weeks)
 - do the **initial review for small and simple construction permits in 48 hours** (currently, it can take up to 3 weeks)
 - purchase technology to move toward **on-line permitting** and **"virtual" one-stop permitting**
 - develop, in coordination with SPU and SDOT, a revised **Street Use Manual** that is more flexible and easier to understand
- Includes resources for SDOT to continue to simplify and make more user friendly the **Street Use Permitting Process**
- Maintains city funding for **street maintenance**. Provides for \$5million to keep the **Alaskan Way Viaduct** on schedule.

Strengthens Neighborhood Business Districts

- Resources for mixed-use and commercial real estate development in targeted business districts:
 - \$241,000 equity fund to help pay for property acquisition and pre-development costs.
 - Low interest financing for pre-development, acquisition or construction
 - \$730,000 in technical and project assistance for community based development corporations
- \$400,000 for the **Neighborhood Façade Improvement Program**. This program helps small business owners improve the aesthetic quality of storefronts in key neighborhood business districts. Half of the grants are from the City and the other half are loans made available from Wells Fargo Bank.
- \$150,000 for technical assistance through Community Capital Development to help small business owners and entrepreneurs.
- \$200,000 in the Department of Neighborhoods to fund economic development initiatives in the Neighborhood Plans
- \$200,000 for support of Neighborhood Business Districts; this includes Business Improvements Areas (BIAs), which provide such programs and services as parking, marketing, beautification, security, and public area maintenance. The City is helping establish a new BIA for Capitol Hill.
- \$66,000 to support downtown retailers with data for business planning, marketing and outreach activities, and to support clean and safe sidewalks and public spaces.
- Funding for the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund:

- \$2.8 million to finance development of commercial sites to house businesses displaced by construction of light rail and pre-apprenticeship training for Rainier Valley residents to participate in the construction of the project

Strengthen Key Industries

Specific examples include:

- **High Tech** - Continues to provide a **B&O tax credit to the high tech industry** for the full amount of their research and development costs in the city. This tax credit was implemented on January 1, 2002. On average, the credit reduced taxes by 65% in the first quarter and 67% in the second quarter. The Mayor will be exploring a different method of taxing technology businesses in our city and will consider making the tax credit permanent.
- **Manufacturing and Industrial** - Increases commitment to **freight mobility**. Specifically, SDOT will:
 - implement the actions identified in the City's Freight Mobility Strategic Action Plan;
 - coordinate with the various freight advocates (e.g., Manufacturing Industrial Council; Ballard Interbay North Manufacturing Industrial Center) and the Port of Seattle to identify candidate locations for oversized, over-the-roadway street name signs, and install up to 12 signs as the first phase of the signing program (by 4th quarter, 2002);
 - implement low-cost spot improvements (e.g., truck route signs and revised pavement markings) in response to input from the freight community (by 2nd quarter, 2003); and
 - close Galer Street where it crosses the mainline BNSF railroad near the Magnolia Bridge; this is one of the most dangerous street crossings in the State, per the WSDOT Rail Office (by 3rd quarter, 2003).
 - provide \$25,000 a year that is matched by private money for major maintenance work on **nonarterial streets paved in the industrial areas** to improve access to businesses. (The Mayor's budget will allow up to 4 of these partnerships per year).
- **Arts and Cultural Affairs:** Create a new office in the Arts Commission dedicated to the promotion of the tourism, music, and film industries in the City.

Leaves no one behind:

A strong economy requires the participation of all of its residents. Ultimately, the economic development budget is an action agenda about family wage jobs and making sure that all of our city residents have an equal opportunity to participate.

- Includes \$400,000 in funding this year to create a **Contracting Development and Competitiveness Center** that will assist small economically disadvantaged businesses, including WMBE businesses, with contract notification, professional training and advice, mentoring, and networking opportunities.
- Transitions **Seattle Jobs Initiative**, the City's nationally recognized workforce development initiative, into an independent non-profit agency that will continue to develop innovative strategies to place low income residents into livable wage jobs.
- Consolidates and expands the **Help for Working Families** program so that low-income working families and individuals qualify for at least \$10 million in federal, state and local benefits for which they are eligible but currently not receiving.
- Provides access to low/no cost **child care and out-of-school time programs** for 975 children so their parents can work or obtain skills training. An outreach campaign to employers will be initiated that provides information about choosing quality childcare and linking employees with child care resources.